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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

10 1. A cultured embryonic stem (ES) cell, wherein the genome of said ES
cell comprises a homozygous disruption of the P_{2X7} receptor, and wherein a cultured
macrophage differentiated from said ES cell exhibits a phenotype of reduced ATP-
stimulated post-translational processing of interleukin-1 α (IL-1 α), IL-1 β , or IL-18, or
reduced ATP-stimulated IL-6 production, or reduced ATP-stimulated intracellular
accumulation of macromolecules.

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2. The cultured ES cell of claim 1, wherein said cell is human.

3. The cultured ES cell of claim 1, wherein said cell is murine.

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